EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Brian M. Duncan on August 4, 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

In claim 1, in line 6, after "of the ball" deleted "pivot; and" and replaced with

--pivot;

a sealing bellows extending from said ball and socket joint housing to said support ring, wherein one end of said sealing bellows engages said support ring;

a connection component surrounding said shaft, said connection component comprising a through bore receiving said shaft of said ball pivot; and--.

In claim 1, in line 7, before "sealing element" deleted "a" and replaced with --an annular--.

In claim 1, in lines 7-8, after "support ring and" deleted "a connection component surrounding the shaft of the ball pivot" and replaced with --said connection component--.

In claim 1, in line 13, after "axially and is" deleted "arranged" and replaced with

--radially arranged within said through bore--.

In claim 1, in line 15, after "radially and is" deleted "arranged" and replaced with --axially arranged on a side of said support ring opposite said sealing bellows--.

In claim 14, in line 7, after "shaft portion" inserted --, said connection component comprising a through bore receiving said shaft portion of said ball pivot--.

In claim 14, in line 8, before "sealing element" deleted "a" and replaced with --an annular--.

In claim 14, in line 14, before "engages said connection" inserted --is axially arranged between and--.

In claim 14, in line 16, before "engages said shaft" inserted --is radially arranged within said through bore between said shaft portion of said ball pivot and said connection component and--.

Canceled claim 21.

In claim 22, in line 1, after "with claim" deleted "21" and replaced with --1--.

In claim 23, in line 1, after "with claim" deleted "21" and replaced with --1--.

In claim 24, in line 6 after "surrounding said shaft" deleted "portion; " and replaced with --portion, said connection component comprising a through bore receiving said shaft portion of said ball pivot;

a sealing bellows extending from said ball and socket joint housing to said support ring, wherein one end of said sealing bellow is in contact with said support ring; and--.

In claim 24, in line 7, before "sealing element" deleted "a" and replaced with --an annular--.

In claim 24, in line 13, before "engages said connection" inserted --is axially arranged on a side of said support ring opposite said sealing bellows between said support ring and said connection component and--.

In claim 24, in line 15, before "engages said shaft" inserted --is radially arranged within said through bore between said shaft portion of said ball pivot and said connection component and--.

In claim 24, in lines 16-18, after "pivot" deleted "; and a sealing bellows extending from said ball and socket joint housing to said support ring, wherein one end of said sealing bellow is in contact with said support ring".

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

As to claim 1, Musashi Seimitsu (JP 402199317) discloses the claimed ball and socket joint with the exception wherein one portion of the sealing element extends generally axially and is radially arranged within the through bore, between the shaft of the ball pivot and the connection component in a radial direction of the ball pivot, and another portion of the sealing element extends radially and is axially arranged on a side of the support ring opposite the sealing bellows between the support ring and the connection component in an axial direction of the ball pivot.

As to claims 14 and 24, Musashi Seimitsu discloses the claimed ball and socket joint with the exception of wherein the profiled body of the sealing element has a first

sealing portion and a second sealing portion in the installed state, the first sealing portion extending in a radial direction of the ball pivot in the installed state such that the first sealing portion is axially arranged on a side of the support ring opposite the sealing bellows between the support ring and the connection component and engages the connection component and the support ring, the second sealing portion extending in an axial direction of the ball pivot in the installed state such that the second sealing portion is radially arranged within the through bore between the shaft portion of the ball pivot and the connection component and engages the shaft portion of the ball pivot.

There is no teaching or suggestion, absent the applicants' own disclosure, for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the ball and socket joint disclosed by Musashi Seimitsu to have the above mentioned elemental features. Furthermore, such modifications would yield unexpected and unpredictable results.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MICHAEL P. FERGUSON whose telephone number is (571)272-7081. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30am-3:00pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571)272-7087. The fax phone

number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MPF
08/04/08

/Michael P. Ferguson/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679